TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

These Papers

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council, the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue
No. 16
Published March, 1945

A Small Farm for the Pastor

RUSSELL HOY

• Six and a half years ago we came to the little church in Canal Lewisville, Coshocton County, Ohio. This little village of forty odd houses is situated on the banks of the Tuscarawas river, two miles northeast of Coshocton, the county-seat town. Consequently, the community reaches out fan shaped from the village, west, north and east, some two to three miles. There are two stores, one grade school and the one church, in the village. The nearest villages are Keene, three miles north, Fresno, four and a half miles northeast, and West LaFayette, six miles east.

Feeling the Call

The church had a membership of 120, 95 of which were active. They had a difficult time in raising a budget of $850 of which $550 was paid the minister. Attendance was around 55 in Sunday School and considerably less for the worship service. The people were rather discouraged and had at one time considered closing up the church.

Feeling the call to go into strictly rural work, we left a county seat town church with a membership of 400 members in the fall of 1938, and rented a fruit farm four miles from the village and church at Canal Lewisville. We had several cows, pigs, a team, two hundred chickens and raised a large garden to supplement our salary of $550.

In the spring of the next year we decided something had to be done about repairing the church building. So with a little money and lots of faith, we raised the building, excavated for a basement (all with volunteer labor) and built a two story educational unit on the rear of the church. By the fall when we had our rededication services, we had a remodeled church, with a full basement, with kitchen, furnace room, and a 36′ x 46′ social and dining room, a redecorated sanctuary with a divided chancel arrangement, besides additional rooms for classes. The total cost was $5250 and in three years the entire debt was paid.

However, at the end of our first year, we decided that the old fruit farm was too large an undertaking, and that a smaller farm situated within the parish would be more desirable. So the Church Official Board rented a house and lot with a small barn in the village, and three acres of pasture land adjoining. Here we moved in the fall of 1939, taking with us one cow, 50 chickens and several hogs. We started to sell a little excess milk to a few of the neighbors, who came to the door for it. As the demand increased we bought a second cow, and the next summer a third cow. For the next three years we retailed between four and five gallons of milk daily to the neighbors which netted around $40 a month, after buying most of our feed. We also raised a couple of hogs for butchering, and 400 chickens, selling most of them for broilers and keeping around 50 laying hens thru the winter. I worked out by the day among my neighbors to earn enough hay and corn for my stock.

Growth

Each year the interest, attendance and membership grew in the church. The budget was increased each year and also the pastor's salary. The people seemed pleased to have a resident pastor in the community, the first one in the history of the community. After living in the village for two years, I approached the Official Board of the Church about buying a parsonage-farm somewhere in the community. Altho they liked the idea, they did not like to go into debt again, just after getting out of debt on the remodeling of the church. However, one or two of the men suggested that I look around for a place and buy it myself. But we had no money, for we had just finished paying off college, hospital and automobile debts. Then one man offered to loan us the money on easy terms.

Thus with the idea incubating in our minds, and with a growing desire to own a home of our own, we purchased 8½ acres of pasture land, one mile north of our church, in the summer of 1941. We started excavating the first week of July. The carpenters came the first of August, and by late October we were moved into our own home. A short time later the District Superintendent and the Official members of the Church were present for the dedication of our new home. Our house is a one-story cottage, 28′ x 36′ with 5 rooms and a bath, completely modern in every way. We also bought, moved, and rebuilt a small barn, and the following spring we built a tile poultry house large enough to house 200 laying hens.

Small Farm Desirable

Now after living for over three years on our own little farm of 8½ acres, (and renting 16 adjoining acres), we are more convinced than ever, that a small farm for a rural minister and a home of his own, is a most desirable thing. It makes for a longer pastorate, it helps the community to accept him and his family as "their own," it gives him physical exercise that is both cultural and profitable, it gives his family a sense of economic security, come what may. It also gives them a type of wholesome home environment where children can be happily raised. In fact, in my opinion, the rural Christian home is the only place where children can be raised to appreciate and experience the real values of life. So not only to satisfy our own desire for a rural home, but for the sake of our three children, we have chosen a rural parish after serving for several years in industrial and small city communities.

In the past six and a half years we have seen what a resident minister can do, living in the parish, serving one church intensively, and identifying himself with his people. This is fundamental, I believe, for rural ministers. I believe that my people feel that I have a better understanding of their problems because I am earning at least a part of my living in the same way as they do.

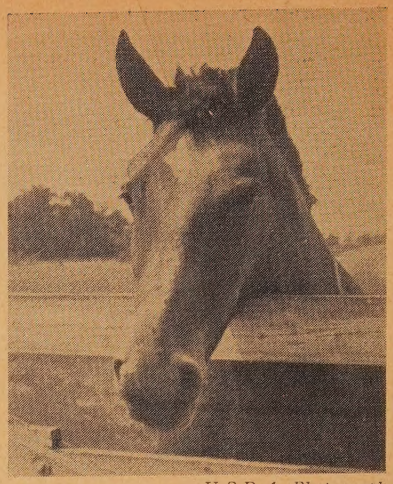
Our church has a budget this year of around $2400, half of which is paid on the pastor's salary. Our membership has grown to 221. Our attendance has also more than doubled. New families moving into the community, regardless of previous denominational affiliations have come into our church. We now have around twelve denominations represented in our membership. Altho Methodist in name and connection, we are in reality a community church. We have a fine working relationship with the local School, Grange, Farm Bureau, Extension Service, Boy Scouts, and other rural organizations. We try not to be institutional minded, but community minded, meeting the needs of the community, regardless of who gets the credit.

Life Ministry

We try to make our whole life a form of ministry. Our personal lives, our home, our neighborliness, our farm work, our preaching, our pastoral calling, our social calls, our recreation, all is a part of our ministry. We cannot divide our time and say, "Now we are doing church work, and now, we are doing farm work." Our total work in church and out is our ministry.

And now our little farm with its cows, calves, pigs, chickens, and the old faithful horse, the young orchard, the garden, the grove of trees, grows dearer to us each year. It is home to us. We helped to build it. We saw our dreams materialize. Our youngest daughter was born here. We have taken root here. It is a part of us. It is surrounded by neighboring farms and kind friends who make us feel we belong to the community. Unless we radically change our minds, we are content to serve our little white church in the valley indefinitely, and live on our own little farm where we shall "sit under our own fig tree, and none shall make us afraid."

"The country life is to be preferred, for there we see the works of God."—*William Penn.*



U.S.D.A. Photograph by Madeleine Osborne

English Churchmen Stress Rural Needs

By Religious News Service

Needs of rural communities were stressed at a conference organized in Birmingham, England, by the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East at which speakers called on Christian workers to devote more attention to rural problems at home and abroad.

The conference was attended by doctors, nurses, educators, agriculturalists, and clergy from various parts of East, West and Central Africa, Egypt, India, China, the Middle East, Canada, Great Britain, and the United States.

The conference stressed that a major part of the world's population lives in rural areas and also by far the greater number of Christian church members in Africa, the Middle East, India, and China as well as Great Britain.

A demand exists, it was pointed out, for a new perspective in the policy and planning of the church throughout the world in view of the fact that at present full-time Christian workers and mission funds are concentrated in urban areas, far from the homes of so many Christian people.

Rural Workers in States

• In the Northern Baptist Convention there are now fourteen states in which full-time specialists serve the rural churches through the State Conventions.

The Lord's Acre Method in a New England Church

GEORGE W. WIESEN

First of all, my conviction is that the financing of the church should begin within the church body. Every member of the church body should give the limit, since they are expected to know and be behind the work the church is doing in the world. After the church adopts its budget, an every member canvass should be carried out by an organized group of workers, who have themselves set a good example with pledges becoming Christian people who are out to encourage others to give to the church's work.

They should go out to reach every member and never omit one member in their visitations. When these have all been reached, the canvassers should visit others in the community who are friendly toward the church, and expect the service of the church. The budget of the church should be presented to them after they have been made aware of the importance of the church in the community. When they find a church that really has something more in mind than saving itself, they most usually will support it.

All in the Community

As yet we haven't made the best use of this method, partly because of the timidity of the canvassers, and partly because we think the church is wholly dependent on its membership for support. All people in the community or area should be reminded that the Bible which most of them have within their homes says in I Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by Him in store as God hath prospered him."

Everyone in the community or area served by the church should be educated to feel the responsibility of making the service the church renders them available for others. They should be expected to pledge toward its support, and should have it brought to their attention that even the government has expected every individual to contribute a large portion of their income to the work of the Christian church or other humanitarian causes. Many people do not know this. Some people never give to the church because they are seldom made acquainted with what the church is really doing.

Supplementary Way

There is a supplementary way of financial support after the canvass has been carried out conscientiously, and that is through the Lord's Acre method. The twenty-fourth Psalm begins with the words, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and He has evidently put into every community much ground that brings no return to Him, because the stewards of this ground will not put it to use for His cause. In every community, there are pieces of ground that could be used by individuals or in a cooperative way to produce an income for the church.

Rural churches are especially prepared to make use of this method, since there are within these churches experts in farming who make a satisfactory income from the soil and could help the church to do likewise. These plots could be taken over by individuals or where there were large plots, they could be worked in a cooperative way by a number of individuals, and the money derived from the products raised turned into the Lord's Acre Fund for any special work the church may have, such as repairs, or charitable work in the community.

With thirty people taking part in our Lord's Acre project begun in 1941, our church has received a total of over $300.00 a year from the project, which is being used for much needed repairs to our sanctuary. Of that amount the pastor's Lord's Acre plot yielded $54.00.

The project is being carried on with much enthusiasm, with the young people starting the season off by picking blueberries and placing them on the Lord's Acre stand where people have learned to look for vegetables, fruits, and other products produced by those enlisting for service in the project. The finances of the church have improved, and aid from the state convention has been reduced.

Gathering Lord's Acre Products in the New Hampshire Church here described.

Puzzle—Which Is the Minister?

• The picture represents the "Thursday shift" of the volunteer crew of the men of the Congregational Church of Pittsville, Wis. They are putting up the studding for a new parsonage.

When money and materials for the much-needed residence were not available, the men of the church undertook to build it themselves. They bought and wrecked an old garage, used the salvaged materials as the rough lumber in the new building, organized a crew for each work day, did the work themselves, and now have a creditable two-story six-room home.

The minister, Rev. Charles E. Olsen, is at the left. Ministers who attended the 1944 session of the Town and Country Leadership School of the University of Wisconsin at Madison will remember Olsen as the genial umpire of the annual baseball classic between the "saints" and the "sinners." He can pound a nail as well as a pulpit and is as useful in a construction gang as in an evangelistic meeting.

The only "professional" employed on the entire job was the carpenter at the right. There had to be somebody who was "boss."

—Charles H. Wicks

Getting Ready for Tomorrow

• In Wisconsin they have recently had a conference on post-war agriculture during which a number of committees made reports, among them one on the rural community. A copy of this report is mimeographed under the title *Rural Communities of Wisconsin* and is available from the College of Agriculture, Madison. It has a section on the rural church and religious interests. "It should not require special argument to convince anyone familiar with American backgrounds that the religious and spiritual life of rural people is important to the future of agriculture and rural life—to democracy itself."

Pastorless Churches

• In the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. alone there are some 1,800 pastorless churches. The Department of Evangelism, Board of National Missions, is sending program material to the lay people who are functioning in these churches.

Growing Edges in Christian Education

• The February 1945 International Journal of Religious Education, 203 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1, Illinois (15c a copy), contains numerous contributions on the general theme above. Among them are the following articles: "The Soil is God's Gift," by Eugene Smathers, minister of Calvary Presbyterian Church, Big Lick, Tennessee; "Rural Pastors Pull Together," by Francis A. Drake, Administrative Secretary, Friends of the Soil.

Big Lick Wins Prize

• Word comes from Big Lick, Tennessee, where Eugene Smathers is minister of the Presbyterian Church, that the community won the third prize among 80 contestants in the Rural Community Improvement Contest conducted by the Knoxville Civic Club.

Town & Country Church

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Remit to the Home Missions Council

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The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

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The Lord's Acres

CLARENCE B. GOULD

• The Lord's Acres is a special church project, which has been conducted by many churches, in several states, and which may be conducted by any rural church, with farmers willing to cooperate in the Project. The kind of crop grown may be determined by the community in which the church is located. In New York State, one of the most successful projects of its kind, has been conducted by the Rev. E. D. Merriam, Minister of the Perry Center Church, Perry, N. Y. The crop grown there is buckwheat, and in 1943, over $1,000.00 was made for the church.

Soybeans

The project in Britton, Michigan, which I here describe, is sponsored by the Goodfellows Club, an organization of men, who appoint a committee of three to have charge of arrangements. The crop grown is soybeans, which is both profitable and practical in this community. The idea of the Britton Project originated with the pastor, who has observed the Lord's Acres in other places, especially in the Perry Center Church, in New York State. The Britton Lord's Acres was not inspired by the "Perry Hayden Dynamic Kernels," and there is no connection. It is the giving to the Lord's work of ALL the proceeds from the land that has been set aside for that purpose. It is not a tithing project. It is a FULL GIFT to the Lord's work.

We came to Britton in February of 1943, and as soon as a decision had been made to come to the Britton Church, we began advocating the Lord's Acres. For various reasons it could not be begun at once. This did not cause the pastor to give up the idea of the Lord's Acres, and he immediately announced that there were needed improvements to the church, and the Lord's Acres was planned, and carried out with success in 1944. Early in the spring the committee was formed by the Goodfellows Club, consisting of Bert Moore, Leland Bush and the pastor. The big heart of Mr. Arthur Brockman responded and he donated to the church, for use as a Lord's Acres Project, ten acres of good land, located on highway M-50 about three miles East of Britton, and a large sign was erected along the highway, announcing the project.

Planting

Tractors and machinery for preparing the land, which had been plowed in the fall of 1943 by Don Armontrout, were furnished by Leland Bush, Charles Benedict, Grant Hoagland, John Houseman, Harold Rohrback, Charles Patterson, Lawrence Hoagland, and W. S. Niblack, Leo Moore, Glenn Gripton and others cooperated in the work. The seed soybeans were furnished by J. J. Walper, (over 17 bushels) and drilled June 5th, by Edgar Brandow, assisted by Raymond Staulter.

The harvesting took place October 12th and with five combines working it was done in less than three hours. The combines were furnished by T. J. Rixom, operated by Orris Tubbs, Jennings Frayer; Charles Benedict, John Houseman, and Arthur Brockman, operated by Warren Lewis. The soybeans were hauled to the Elevator by Edward Rodgers, and Stanley Smith. Several men were present for the harvest: Raynor Bendict, Glenn Gripton, with his pickup, Perry Younglove with his truck, Ernest Palmer, Ford Exelby, Charles Patterson, Cyrus Smith, Clay Underwood, William Kuster, A. E. Keran, and several others.

Harvesting

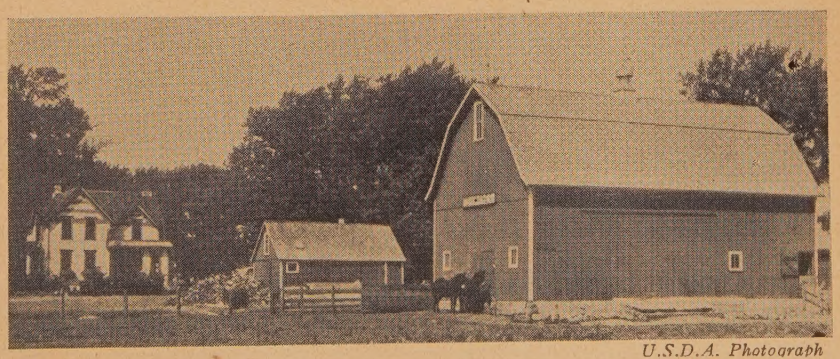
There were two hundred and eight bushels of soybeans. The government price of $2.04 per bushel was paid by the purchaser, a total of $427.00. The check was held by the chairman of the committee, Bert Moore, who turned it over to the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Church, Glenn Gripton, in the Dedication Service, which was conducted Sunday evening, November 5th.

One of the unique features of the Britton Project is the carefully worked out details, which differ somewhat from other similar projects. The service of dedication, and positive injunction that the money is to be used for some special improvement, and not for regular church expenses. Also the Britton Project is unique in that the land, seed, machinery, and all work was donated, and all proceeds were realized for the church. It was mutually good for all who had a part in it, and for the church and community, and was not a burden to any one individual. Any church that tries this project may find it helpful in many ways.

Demobilization

• Demobilization will bring American churches a two-fold postwar problem in education—of civilians as well as of those who are returning from service, Dr. Harry C. Munro, director of adult work for the International Council of Religious Education, declared at the February 6-9 meeting in Chicago of the Council's board of trustees and Commission on Educational Program.

"These people on the home front," stated Dr. Munro, "need to be equipped with intelligence and understanding as they welcome home the service men. Those at home will have more adjustments to make than the returnee."



U.S.D.A. Photograph

Collects in Spring

I

O God, the Creator who "let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind," and said that it was good: Make us see how the earth is holy, that in our work and in our play we may never abuse thy creation, but use it for human welfare and thy glory; through Jesus Christ, who came to give us abundant life. Amen.

II

Almighty God, who commanded the dry land to appear; Grant to the farmer with his plow the love for his work, that the good earth bring forth a bountiful harvest for us and our neighbors; through Jesus Christ, who loved the fields. Amen.

III

Great Father, whose creation is never ended and is revived in the springtime; Open our eyes to see the trees taking on foliage and the flowers putting forth buds, so that in us may be created newness of life: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who considered the lilies how they grow. Amen.

—*Ralph Grieser*

Small Farm and Big Farm

• *Small Farm and Big Farm,* by Carey McWilliams, is the one-hundredth in the series of popular, factual, ten-cent pamphlets published by the Public Affairs Committee, nonprofit, educational organization at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

Mr. McWilliams says that "if democracy in agriculture is to be our chief concern in forming agricultural policy, then important fields of action are clearly indicated. Putting a 'floor' under the family-sized farm by the removal of the present hidden subsidies to industrialized farming; the removal of special privileges now enjoyed by certain farm organizations; and the enlargement of governmental aids of various types (not restricted to price alone) to those groups engaged in agricultural production other than commercial farmers; a concerted effort to break the hold of food processors and distributors on farm production—these are but a few of the directions in which such a policy might move."

Youth in Wartime Agriculture

• The Home Missions Council of North America, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., has available a limited supply of a pamphlet, *The Church's Responsibility for Youth in Wartime Agriculture* at 5c per copy.

The Way Farmers Meet!

• Last year more than five thousand township Farm Bureau meetings, 5,068 to be exact, were held by local units of the Farm Bureaus in 96 Iowa counties. County Extension workers attended approximately four thousand of these. Four-H club talent was used in six hundred, and older young people in 120. School leaders helped with 439 *and church leaders with* 206.

Representatives of AAA, FSA, SCS and other federal agencies contributed to another 439. County officials were used in 253. Representatives of town groups helped with 318, while Iowa State College specialists aided with 123. These local community meetings are strengthening democracy. They are important in wartime as well as in peacetime. Their number is increasing.

—W. H. Stacy, *Iowa State College*

What Do Colleges Do?

• In the course of an address on "The Small Community as the Birthplace of Enduring Peace" before the Institute on Conditions for an Enduring Peace, Dr. Arthur E. Morgan made the following observations: "While definite statistics are not available, sample checking indicates that of young men and women who go to college from our farms and villages, probably 9 out of 10 find their way to cities."

The Squatter at Walden

A Page From History

• One hundred years ago, Henry David Thoreau, made plans to live in a hut on the shores of Walden Pond near Concord, Massachusetts. Thoreau squatted on a tract of about eleven acres of land, mostly in pine and hickory trees. He purchased materials valued at twenty-eight dollars and twelve and one-half cents. Certain items were too high, he insisted. In the book, *Walden,* he does not list timber, stone or sand, adding that he claimed these by squatter's right.

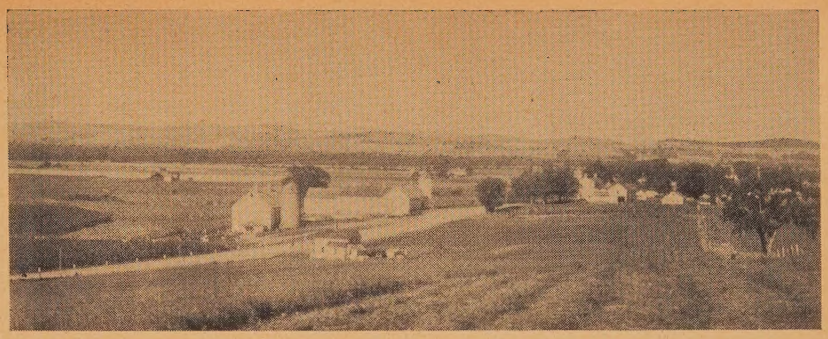
This was one of Thoreau's answers to the builders of the railroads and the inventors of machines. He said that they were using improved means to an unimproved end. He was a scholar in search of the simple means of support. A matter of private business for the support of an author became in due course a matter of much wider significance. Thoreau's sojourn in the wilderness became also a defiance of the rising industrialism.

In the book, *Walden,* the first chapter is entitled "Economy." It contains a thorough description of the simple subsistence farming he carried out. He wished to show that the good life could be lived without aid of gadgets. He believed that the productive homestead would produce a living and give time for a search for the true values.

B. Y. L.

U.S.D.A. Photograph by Knell

Book Reviews



Walkin' Preacher of the Ozarks. By Guy Howard. Harpers, New York, 1944. $2.50.

Guy Howard's book makes good reading. It combines description of a little known section of the United States with a tale of an important (but also little known) portion of the rural church's ministry. The Ozarks would present a formidable social barrier to any outsider. Guy Howard came from the outside, but had the ability to step easily into the life of the people. He became one of them. His story tells clearly how he shared life with his adopted people until they came to trust him, and to confide in him. Having achieved that, he was able to lead them toward goals they had almost been too discouraged to set for themselves.

There are many itinerant preachers of Guy Howard's type in the South. Few, however, have his advantage of background and education. While following the traditional pattern of the itinerant preacher (who "works his way through the ministry") he does not get lost in his environment. Being part of it and yet able to rise above it, he can be more effective than the average mountain preacher in defining the practical difference between the saved and the unsaved life.

Where he falls short is in his conception of the total task of the church in an area like the Ozarks. The people are poor, isolated, lacking in education, and with narrow religious views. There are reasons for the existence of such conditions which must be recognized and dealt with. Unrealistic views of the social, economic, and spiritual structure of mountain (or super-rural) life are all too common in the church. The church must have a program and policy going to the heart of every difficulty the mountain man faces—his livelihood, his spiritual life, his education, his social life. The church must have a vigorous program of individual, group, and community advance for every life it touches. There is little conception of any such program in the *Walkin' Preacher.* Religious education is nil; young people's work is stereotyped; a community church is allowed to founder on the rocks of local dissension; the roots of the community in agriculture are ignored so far as any improvement is concerned.

The *Walkin' Preacher* is a good story, and the rural pastor should regard it as such. But he should beware of making it a pattern for his personal and parish work.

—*D. Campbell Wyckoff*

The Christian Mission in Our Day. By Luman J. Shafer, New York 10, Friendship Press, 1944. $1.00, cloth; 60 cents, paper.

Dr. Shafer, who was once a missionary abroad, and is now an administrator of foreign missions, makes a clear and comprehensive—yet concise—appraisal of the world mission enterprise of our churches. He sees in this great war a series of both vertical and horizontal conflicts. Not only are nations fighting against nations—groups within nations are fighting each other with considerable vigor. With it all there has been the rise of science and secularism, which have contributed to "the revolutionary crisis of faith."

Fully considered is the situation of the colored peoples, both now and in the postwar world. Dr. Shafer interprets not only "one world," but also "a cooperative world." By what bricks and by what motives can it be built? Plainly, a world faith is required.

There has emerged a new fact for our day—a world church. There is new life in the younger churches. There is a new ecumenical witness in the older churches. Do we have a "self-renewing church?" Dr. Shafer brings evidence of the "invincible vitality."

Among many other things, Dr. Shafer writes vivid messages for the missionaries of our day and of the future, and for every person who now participates in the life of the local church. He is a thinker who can write. The questions for thought and discussion show his grasp of current prophetic and ecclesiastical thought. This is a work of faith that generates faith.

Scenes from the Psalms. By Harry A. Brandt. Brethren Publishing House, Elgin, Illinois, 1944. 64 pp. 75c.

This is a book of meditations based on the Psalms, accompanied by beautiful pictures of Ernest G. Hoff. The Psalms contain many passages based on familiar outdoor scenes. In Psalm I, for example, there is a reference to the tree planted by the rivers of water. Others speak of the heavens, the mountains, the springs in the valleys, the creatures of the open fields. There are fifteen meditations. This booklet will be useful to the minister, the leader in the young people's group and the superintendent of the church school.

Bethlehem and Rochdale — The Churches and Consumer Cooperation, 1844-1944. By Benson Y. Landis, New York 11, The Cooperative League in the U.S.A. (167 West 12th St.), 1944. 25c.

This illustrated booklet tells the story of the interest of Christian churches and leaders in economic cooperation for 100 years. It quotes Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch in the early years; tells about the Rochdale Sunday School Superintendent, John T. W. Mitchell, who became the world's first consumer prophet; describes the religious origin of the credit union movement.

Urgent! United National Clothing Collection

• Henry J. Kaiser, the noted industrialist, has accepted the President's invitation to form a national committee to collect, during the month of April, usable clothing for people in war-devastated areas. The tragedy of civilian victims of the war in Europe and Asia is being revealed rapidly in these months which bring the war to a climax. New clothing can neither be bought nor manufactured in any adequate quantity to meet the needs of at least 125,000,000 men, women and children in Europe alone. Therefore Americans are being asked to help. "What can you spare that they can wear?"

The cooperation of the Protestant churches which are affiliated with the Federal Council of Churches and the Foreign Missions Conference has been requested. The Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction, representing these two bodies, has helped to shape the national plans and has invited the various denominations to give such backing as they will.

The local organization of the Collection will include all elements of the community, labor, business, farm, service clubs, churches, boy and girl Scouts, etc., all cooperating. Each community elects its own local chairman and sets up its committee membership. Each local committee will be directly in contact with the national office.

If no committee has been organized in your community, and you have no branch of the three national service clubs perhaps you should take the initiative in helping to organize your community. Write at once to United National Clothing Collection, 100 Maiden Lane, New York 5, N. Y., for information and plans.

In this collection especial emphasis is put on the fact of community-wide participation. The goal is to be 150,000,000 lbs. of usable clothing including woolen garments, bedding, and shoes. Already clothing collected in the church effort last September has been allocated and much of it sent to various countries of Europe and the Middle East.

"I Choose the Rural Ministry"

• Rev. Marcius E. Taber contributes an article on the subject above in the January 25, Michigan Christian Advocate, Adrian, Michigan. Mr. Taber is minister of a Methodist Church near Battle Creek, Michigan. He says that he ministers to a much higher percentage of children and youth than do most city pastors. He feels that when he devotes his life to the country church, he is also serving the city church because 10 to 50 per cent of those he works with eventually go to the cities. He enjoys the rural pastorate and expects to continue to enjoy it. He hopes the Methodists will soon have "rural bishops"—he has heard that the Roman Catholics have a number of rural bishops. He hopes many more ministers will regard the rural ministry as a permanent vocation.

He has stressed the vacation church school program. Transportation problems were met by dividing the area into neighborhoods. Various families took turns to keep the school going. The women's society took care of mid-afternoon lunch. "The rural minister is often thrilled by the achievements of the boys and girls he sees developing in the churches he serves, and if he remains in his parish for five or six years, he becomes proud in a way impossible with shorter pastorates."

Highlights of Government Programs

• Conferences with government officials reveal the following emphases for 1945:

1) Gardens will be as much needed as ever.

2) Seasonal farm labor will be needed more than ever.

3) Food rationing will probably be continued on the current scale for a long time.

Disciples Rural Fellowship

• The Disciples Rural Fellowship publishes a bulletin for its members. It is distributed by Rev. George H. Wilson, of Henry, Illinois.

Prayer for a Rural Family

Wise and Compassionate God, accept this our prayer:
Sheltered from storm and darkness, under this roof,
This family kneels to adore Thee.
For the day just past,
For keeping us safely, body and soul,
Now we most humbly thank Thee.
For hilltops and verdure,
For sunlight and wind and boundless space,
For rain and the sky's rich color,
For boughs and blossoms and cold, clean snow,
We are eternally grateful.
For birds, and beasts,
For the good black earth and the seeds producing
The plenteous harvest; for times without number
When we have eaten of the same harvest,
We thank Thee and bless Thee forever.
Deliver us safely, if such be Thy will,
From deluge and drought,
From famine and war and disaster.
Give us tomorrow, as yesterday and today,
All things most needed for rightful living;
And move our hearts that we may have sorrow
For sinning against Thee.
God of the hearth and the harvest,
Thy children, here kneeling, adore Thee.
Bless now our rest
And cherish us safe till the morrow.

—*National Catholic Rural Life Conference*

Contributors

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Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short items; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.

Circulars Available

• Quantities of circulars describing TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are available without charge to any reader. Simply drop us a post card, letting us know how many copies you would like to distribute.